



The Sixty-ninth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,795th Concert

Duo Miller-Schmid
Annlynn Miller, *pianist*
Ulrich Schmid, *cellist*

September 29, 2010
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
West Building Lecture Hall

Admission free

Program

Alfred Schnittke (1934–1998)

Epilogue from the Ballet Peer Gynt for Cello, Piano, and Tape (1986)

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Fünf Stücke im Volkston, op. 102

Mit Humor (“Vanitas vanitatum”)

Langsam

Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen

Nicht zu rasch

Stark und markiert

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Sonata for Piano and Cello in G Minor, op. 65

Allegro moderato (Maestoso)

Scherzo: Allegro con brio

Largo

Finale: Allegro

*This concert is made possible by a grant from the Ann and Gordon
Getty Foundation*

The Musicians

In 1994 American pianist Annlynn Miller and Swiss cellist Ulrich Schmid met at the Academy of Music in Vienna, where they both held teaching positions. They immediately launched a concert series — Happy Birthday Beethoven — that has been an annual highlight since its début. The following year Miller and Schmid joined together to form a permanent duo dedicated to performing the major works for piano and cello. They have received lavish praise for their performances throughout Europe and in the United States. In addition to the complete works for piano and cello of Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms, Duo Miller-Schmid is renowned for its interpretation of the sonatas of Alfred Schnittke and of his still unpublished *Epilogue from the Ballet Peer Gynt for Cello, Piano, and Tape*. This afternoon's concert at the National Gallery marks their third performance in Washington, DC.

ANNLYNN MILLER

Widely acclaimed as a dynamic and sensitive concert pianist, Annlynn Miller plays an all-encompassing repertoire of solo and chamber music. She was born in New York City and pursued her musical studies at the Juilliard School of Music and at Sarah Lawrence College before joining the advanced performing class of Bruno Seidlhofer at the Vienna Academy of Music. A longtime student of Rudolf Firkušný, Miller was also invited to participate in the Beethoven master class held in Italy by the legendary Wilhelm Kempff. Her affinity for Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms has contributed greatly to her international career.

A member of the faculty at the Richard Strauss Conservatory in Munich for ten years, Miller has produced a remarkable number of prize winners since establishing her piano studio in Switzerland.

ULRICH SCHMID

Cellist Ulrich Schmid has also established a distinguished career as a soloist throughout Europe and the United States. Born in Bern, Switzerland, he was accepted at a young age into the master class of Paul Tortelier at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris.

As a student of André Navarra, Schmid attained his concert diploma at the Musikhochschule in Detmold, Germany, where he was active as Navarra's assistant before he began teaching his own cello class at the same school. He held the position of principal cellist with the Bielefeld Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestra of the State Theater in Darmstadt. A recipient of the renowned Diploma d'Onore from the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy, Ulrich Schmid performs on a magnificent Italian master cello built in 1774 by Nicolas Gagliano.

Program Notes

The *Epilogue from the Ballet Peer Gynt for Cello, Piano, and Tape* is Schnittke's own transcription, done in 1992, of the final scene of his ballet *Peer Gynt* (1986). The epilogue is dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich, who played the premiere performance with pianist Irina Schnittke on May 25, 1993. In the ballet, the Epilogue sheds new light on the events of Peer Gynt's past life, as Peer recalls them in a long duet with his mother, Solveig. He remembers his travels, his encounters with evil, his return home, and his repentance. Schnittke writes: "Peer Gynt is a strange character, having no key, perhaps even stranger than Faust. The continuous D major chord of the pre-taped choir creates a surreal mystical background, into which reality disappears." The musical themes of the ballet are juxtaposed and overlapped most unexpectedly, creating a new perspective. The concluding steps of an overtone row represent the ascent to infinite heights, gradually dissolving into the eternal D major chord.

Robert Schumann completed a total of nineteen chamber music compositions, most of which are sonatas, trios, quartets, and quintets. The remaining chamber works fall into the category that many consider to be Schumann's strength—the short "mood" piece. The *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* (Five Pieces in the Popular Style) fall into this category. Schumann allowed for substitutions in the lead instrument in his mood pieces. This was most likely because they were written not as virtuosic performance pieces, but rather for high-level amateurs to enjoy playing in their homes. Consequently the pieces, though not terribly difficult to perform, are enormously tuneful and devoid of the typical Schumannesque angst. The middle three are melodically charming and full of rich romanticism, both in the cello and piano writing. The second has a pastoral sweetness, while the fourth starts off in a lively and joyous mood, then yields to a mesmerizing melody.

Chopin's *Sonata for Piano and Cello in G Minor*, op. 65, was his last major work. Chopin wrote little for instruments other than the piano, and this full-length sonata for cello and piano occupied the composer for an unusually long period. The work was published in 1847, but he had been working on it since 1845. Chopin seems to have had difficulty in shaping the relationship between the two instruments. Often the cello and piano take turns in the spotlight, but the final result distributes the musical material equally between the two. Beneath the surface, however, one can hear the piano wanting to break loose, as if the cello were infringing on its sacred ground. The influence of German romantic composers on Chopin shows itself in this work in the presence of integrated sonata form, unified by a few related motifs. Chopin creates relationships among the four movements of the sonata through melodic references: the primary cello motif of the first movement, a rising and falling half-step that opens the lush second movement, the folksy scherzo of the third movement, and the tarantella finale. The clear divisions between cello and piano in the second movement, contrast with the more integrated use of the instruments in the first movement. The finale is perhaps the most Chopinesque of the four movements, concluding with a coda in the major key.

The premiere performance of the sonata in Paris, with Chopin at the piano, received great acclaim, but it turned out to be his last public performance.

Program notes by Danielle DeSwert Hahn

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Weiss-Kaplan-Newman Trio

Music by Beethoven, Dvořák, and Newman

October 3, 2010

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



Håkon Austbø, pianist

Music by Egge, Mortensen,
Valen, and Wallin

October 6, 2010

Wednesday, 12:10 pm

West Building Lecture Hall

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
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Washington, DC

www.nga.gov